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ON TAP

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WINTER RAINS

The staff at TCWD hopes our many District customers have been relatively unaffected by the recent rains. Indeed, the amount of rain in the Trabuco Canyon area during December was extraordinary not only in amount, but duration of time. The District's Wastewater Treatment facility, located in the undeveloped end of Dove Canyon, takes rain measurements on a daily basis. Rain was measured on one day at the end of December at five and one half inches in a twelve hour period. This unusually heavy amount of rain caused severe conditions among some homeowners from Dove Canyon all the way to Harris Grade.

The other areas of the District did not go unscathed by this heavy rain either. Anytime there is a heavy flow of water at or over District facilities or infrastructure (mostly pumping stations and pipes in the ground), there is the danger of severe damage to District property.

In the case of the heavy rain mentioned above, Trabuco Creek became a raging river and threatened the District's Well Project. Also, the main transmission lines in the road along Rose Canyon Road were threatened by the changed course of the creek.

Fortunately, the rain subsided enough on Thursday, December 30th to allow some emergency repairs to occur. The Board of Directors and staff of TCWD extend special thanks to the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) Dozer Operators and the Manager of Equipment Operations of the County of Orange Public Works Department for taking swift

action to assist the District in protecting its threatened property.

The District was pleased that it was able to assist the OCFA earlier in that day by providing earth movement equipment and an operator to clear the way of mudslide debris for the OCFA personnel and equipment on Bell Canyon Road in Dove Canyon. This was the beginning of an emergency evacuation due to mudslides and an unknown condition of nearby slopes.

In the past, after the rain has subsided and the extent of the damage was evaluated, the District has been able to submit for reimbursement to the federal government under the provisions of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for reimbursement of costs related to emergency actions and repairs. Because the County of Orange and the State of California have declared the recent rain events as disasters, it is anticipated the costs related to these emergency actions and repairs will be eligible for reimbursement. At this time, the District staff is preparing all the necessary paperwork.

Finally, the heavy rains should serve as a reminder that all of us need to be prepared for emergencies. This preparation needs to include a "Family Plan" where everyone in the home knows where to meet if an evacuation order is issued. There should be flashlights available in more than one location in the home. Drinking water in bottles should be readily available. And last, but certainly not least, a list of important phone numbers and emergency numbers should be readily available – the refrigerator is always a good location for this.

WATER RATE ADJUSTMENT

After absorbing wholesale water rate increases for the last seven years from Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MET), the Board of Directors of TCWD approved a modest rate increase to offset the increased price of wholesale water the District purchases.

Effective January 1, 2011, MET increased its rate for an acre foot of water (the amount of water one foot deep needed to cover one acre of land) by 9.2 %.

This will translate to a modest 6% increase effective January 1, 2011 to the TCWD customers due to the fact that this is only a portion of the commodity charge (electricity and chemicals are also included in the commodity charge). The part of the customer bill that will be affected is the amount charged in the Tiered Rates, not the Flat Charge nor the Water Reliability and Emergency Storage Fee.

For more information concerning the need for water rate adjustment, please see the District's website.

WATER CONSERVATION

As we enter the New Year, many consider setting personal resolutions to accomplish some goal or desire. As your local water district, TCWD recommends water conservation-based New Year's resolutions.

For instance, now is an excellent time to change out the backup battery on your irrigation timer. Typically, when there is a power outage, the backup battery is designed to ensure the continued operation of the irrigation system. Unfortunately, these batteries are often neglected and never changed out due to lack of use or short life span.

These small batteries can pose a problem when the timer loses their power supply because when power is restored, these devices are designed to implement their default settings. The default settings for many timers currently available on the market are typically ten minutes per station. Usually, your residential irrigation timer is not high on the concern list during a power outage and this often happens without the homeowner's knowledge. Unfortunately, this can result in unnecessarily increased water consumption.

Additionally, the New Year is a good time to review your irrigation schedule. It is important to adjust irrigation schedules throughout the year as the seasons change from one to the next. During the month of January (if it is not raining), it is recommended that sprinkler run times be reduced to four minutes for grasses and three minutes for plants, once a day, two days a week. It is important to always inspect your gardens and lawns for stress or over or under-irrigating, as well as watching for runoff which is an indicator of over-irrigating.

Another good water conservation-based resolution can be the implementation of California-friendly plants in your garden. There are a wide variety of colorful plants, shrubs, and trees that can be purchased from local nurseries. Once established, many of these plants require a minimal amount of irrigation, which then translates into reduced water consumption for you.

These are just a few examples of water conservation-based actions which homeowners can take advantage of to have an impact on their water consumption and water bill.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The Regular Board of Directors Meeting is held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the District's office located at 32003 Dove Canyon Drive, Trabuco Canyon. The public is encouraged to attend.

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Board Meeting was held on December 15, 2010, and the following items are highlights from the Meeting:

- Status update relating to Water Monitoring and Water Conservation efforts
- Status update relating to El Toro Sewer Lift Station
- Status update relating to Baker Regional Water Treatment Facility
- Status update relating to Rose Canyon and Lang Wells Groundwater Treatment Facility
- Approved the proposed water rate adjustment
- Elections for the offices of District Board President and Vice President
- Determined Committee Member and Agency Representative appointments

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We welcome your comments, suggestions and questions. Please call or write Michael Perea at

TCWD'S ON TAP

Trabuco Canyon Water District

32003 Dove Canyon Drive

Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679

(949) 858-0277 Telephone (949) 858-3025 Facsimile

www.tcwd.ca.gov